

Message Text

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PAGE 01 COTONO 00709 121319Z
ACTION INR-10

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FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU
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INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 732

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 709

USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP, PINR, DM, BE
SUBJ: BIOGRAPHIC INFO ON DAVID GBAGUIDI

REF: BRUSSELS 8987

1. DAVID GBAGUIDI WAS BORN IN SAVALOU, DAHOMEY/BENIN AUGUST 28, 1942. HE WAS EDUCATED IN DAHOMEY AND FRANCE AND IN 1967 OBTAINED A DEGREE IN AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERING FROM THE IAE IN PARIS.

2. UNDER AN INTERNATIONAL VISITOR GRANT MR. GBAGUIDI VISITED THE U.S. IN 1971 TO OBSERVE AGRICULTURAL TECHNIQUES IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE COUNTRY AND TO VISIT UNIVERSITIES HAVING DEPARTMENTS SPECIALIZING IN RURAL PROBLEMS AND AGRICULTURE. PREVIOUSLY, IN 1966, WHILE A STUDENT IN FRANCE, HE VISITED POLAND AND THE SOVIET UNION ON A STUDY-TOUR.

3. FROM 1960-68 MR. GBAGUIDI WAS TREASURER OF THE DAHOMEAN STUDENTS UNION. IN 1970 HE WAS APPOINTED DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH OF THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND LATER WAS TRANSFERRED TO BE THE SENIOR AGRICULTURAL OFFICIAL IN THE BORGOU PROVINCE. IN 1975 HE WAS TRANSFERRED TO THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR WHERE HE SERVED AS DIRECTOR OF STUDY AND PLANS,
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A POSITION WHICH GAVE HIM GREAT POWER IN ASSIGNMENT OF PERSONNEL AND ALLOWED HIM EASY ACCESS TO INTERIOR MINISTER AZONHIHO. FROM THE INTERIOR MINISTRY HE MOVED TO HIS PRESENT POSITION AS

DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL LOTTERY. GBAGUIDI WAS NAMED BENIN'S AMBASSADOR TO THE NETHERLANDS IN AUGUST 1977.

4. MR. GBAGUIDI IS MARRIED TO A FRENCH WOMAN AND HAS TWO DAUGHTERS.

5. BECAUSE OF BENINESE GOVERNMENT RESTRICTIONS ON CONTACTS WITH DIPLOMATS, WE HAVE NOT HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE MR. GBAGUIDI RECENTLY. ACCORDING TO OUR FILES, HOWEVER, IN THE PAST HE HAD BEEN VERY FRIENDLY WITH AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVES AND WAS CONSIDERED A FRIEND OF THE U.S. WE HAVE NO INFO ON HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD TERRORISTS BUT WOULD ASSUME THAT HE WOULD TAKE HIS CUE FROM THE GOVERNMENT. ALTHOUGH BENIN MAKES IT A PRACTICE TO SUPPORT RADICAL MOVEMENTS SUCH AS THE POLISARIO AND SOUTH MOLUCCANS, WE DOUBT THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD WISH TO PLACE ITSELF IN A POSITION OF APPEARING TO SUPPORT TERRORIST ACTIONS. THOMPSON

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